

Phan Rang AB Newsletter

The History of Phan Rang AB and the stories of those who served there.
“Keeping the memories alive” Newsletter 253

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HISTORICAL AUSSIE ICON AT PHAN RANG

“... the Sydney Harbour Bridge was like the Statue of Liberty...”



By Bob Howe

No 2 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) personnel boldly expressed their Australian identity while at Phan Rang Air Base.

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN

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Not only were the Aussies well known for their consumption, and occasional sharing, of a great Aussie beer (VB) - they also built a replica of Australia’s famous Sydney Harbour Bridge to remind them of home.

To Australians, the Sydney Harbour Bridge was like the Statue of Liberty, especially for those who immigrated with their families to Australia from far away countries, sailing under the bridge to start a new life down under.

Anyone travelling up and down the road leading to the 14th Aerial Port from 19 August 1969 onwards could not but notice an unusual structure, which crossed the stormwater channel between No.2 Squadron’s Headquarters building and its maintenance hangar, where ground crew worked on the Canberra Mk 20 bomber 24-7, achieving an extraordinary high maintenance rate throughout the four years the Squadron was based at Phan Rang.

The object was a miniature replica of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, lovingly constructed in their spare time by No. 2 Squadron workshops’ crew – Corporal Bert Grossel and Leading Aircraftsmen Bob Cogan, Mal Cryer and Steve Gainsford.



Back in Australia the original Bridge had a well-known history, dating back to its official opening on 19 March 1932, when the Premier (=Governor) of the Australian State of New South Wales (Jack Lang) was supposed to open the bridge by cutting a ribbon at its southern end.

However, just as Lang was about to apply his ceremonial scissors, a man in military uniform, Francis de Groot, rode up on a horse, slashing the ribbon with his sword and opening the

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Sydney Harbour Bridge in the name of the people of New South Wales, before the official ceremony began. He was promptly arrested.



Francis de Groot declares the real Sydney Harbour Bridge open, 1932

De Groot was a member of a right-wing paramilitary group called the **New Guard**, which was opposed to Lang's leftist policies and resentful of the fact that a member of the British royal family had not been asked to open the bridge.



Not to be outdone, No. 2 Squadron decided to repeat the tradition when visiting RAAF Deputy Chief, Air Vice-Marshal W.E. (Bill) Townsend, was invited to open the Phan Rang bridge.

Air Defence Guard (ADG) boss Flying Officer Ken Lawson had a captured enemy sword, so that part was OK, but when it came to the horse, the only one readily available was the mascot of the 554th Civil Engineering Squadron (Red Horse) – a Montagnard pony.

Borrowing the pony for this occasion, Ken duly disrupted the Phan Rang opening ceremony, cutting the ribbon before the distinguished guest. However, because Ken was too large and the pony too small, the pony was only led across the bridge rather than ridden.

It was all good fun.

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Note: Robert W. "Bob" Howe has probably contributed more to the Phan Rang Newsletter than anyone else. His footprints and or contributions can be found in the following newsletters: 100, 101, 105-107, 109, 111-115, 117, 121, 124-127, 130, 132, 142, 144, 147, 148, 152, 154, 157, 168, 186, 187, 193, 198, 205, 207, 208, 209, 211, 213, 214, 225, 238, 239, 240, 246, 248. 251, 252.

Paratroopers Help The Right Number

(Pacific Stars And Stripes, December 8, 1966, Tokyo, Japan)

PHAN RANG, Vietnam — There's something symbolic in the number 101 to 1st Brigade paratroopers — like the 101 scholarships the "Diplomats and Warriors" will give to Vietnamese schoolchildren.

When 1st Lt. John Blanks Jr. heard that many students in the Phan Rang area could no longer continue to attend school because they lacked money, he decided to do something about it. The Support Battalion civic action officer appealed to the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Div.

Blanks, from Macon, Ga., was told it would take 500 piasters a month to keep a child in school. This would be about \$50 a year for one student.

The "Screaming Eagles" said they'll take care of that. What's more, they pledged to support — indefinitely — 101 students in five high schools in the Phan Rang area.

554th RED HORSE: 'EMPER DUCIMUS' for 47 Years

(October 10, 2012 Targeted News Service (USA))

The 554th RED HORSE Squadron continues to uphold its unit motto, "semper ducimus" or "always leading" as it celebrates its 47th birthday on Oct.12, making the 554th RHS the oldest RED HORSE squadron in the U.S. Air Force.

As other services have well known units, such as the Army's 101st and 82nd Airborne, the Air Force's RED HORSE, along with the Thunderbirds, have paved its way to the knowledge of many, military or civilian.

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What makes RED HORSE truly unique in the civil engineer community is that it is classified as a weapons system and provides a highly responsive force to support contingency, peacetime and humanitarian operations world-wide.

REDHORSE capabilities include but are not limited to: cradle-to-grave engineering, aircraft launch systems, bed-down operations, expedient facility construction, heavy equipment, water well drilling, concrete and asphalt batch plant, quarry, explosive demolition, air assault, supply, logistics, food services, medical, administration, training, contracting and comptroller operations.

In the early years of the Vietnam Conflict the Air Force lacked the engineering capability to quickly respond to expedient wartime construction and disaster recovery efforts on U.S. bases. At this point, repairs were beyond the scope of a regular civil engineering unit. The Air Force needed a squadron that could construct expeditionary airfields and build facilities in the most austere conditions supporting forward deployed tactical units.

By September 1965 Tactical Air Command (TAC) created two units with the name REDHORSE, an acronym meaning; Rapid Engineering Deployable Heavy Operations Repair Squadron Engineer. These two units would initially deploy to Southwest Asia. The 554th Civil Engineering Squadron (Heavy Repair) was constituted on Oct. 1, 1965 and organized 11 days later. The 554th and 555th CES Squadrons began training at Cannon AFB, N.M. The 554th CES initially deployed to **Phan Rang Air Base**, Republic of Vietnam in February 1966 where its first major project was a complete runway reconstruction.

In May 1967, the 554th CES was reassigned to the 1st Civil Engineer Group, and on Feb 15, 1970, the 554th CES moved to Cam Ranh Bay Air Base and then again to Da Nang Air Base on Nov. 30, 1971. By the end of 1971, the 554th CES was the only squadron remaining in the Republic of Vietnam. It moved to U Tapao AB, Thailand, on June 30, 1972 to remove modular facilities.

A few years later, on 5 January 1976, the unit was assigned to Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) and moved yet again to Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea with a detachment remaining in the Philippines for a short time. In the early 1980s, the 554th CES proved to be instrumental and

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lived up to its name by constructing facilities at Suwon Air Base to support a newly assigned A-10 squadron assigned to 5th Air Force.

In 1987, 7th Air Force became the proud owner of the 554th CES, and on 15 October 1988, re-designated the unit as the 554th Civil Engineering Squadron, REDHORSE. On 8 March 1989 it was re-designated as the 554th RHS civil engineering squadron, and on March 1, 1994 as the 554th RHS. The unit's size was significantly reduced in the mid-1990s, but by November 2000, its manning had rebounded, creating a unit reinforced by strength of 144.

In 2004, the 554th RHS established an airborne capability known as the 554th RHS Assault, Assessment, and Repair Operations (AARO, pronounced "arrow") team to support rapid airfield seizure and repair capabilities in the Pacific Theater.

Even today, this capability is the only one of its kind in the PACAF area of responsibility.

554th RHS operating location alpha was activated at Andersen AFB, Guam on September 26, 2005 after the decision was made to move the 554th RHS from Korea. On January 22, 2008, with the relocation of manpower and equipment complete, the 554th RHS operating location alpha became the 554th RHS of the 36th Contingency Response Group, 36th Wing on Andersen AFB, Guam.

In 2009, the 554th RHS completed its first expeditionary deployment outside of the Pacific Command AOR in 35 years in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. In 2010, the 554th RHS continues extensive bed-down construction operations supporting itself, the 644th Combat Communications Squadron and the 736th Security Forces Squadron at Northwest Field. In September 2012, the 554th deployed again for the second time in 38 years outside of Pacific Command and the first time as the lead unit since the Vietnam War.

Today, the 554th is one of only four active duty REDHORSE squadrons in the Air Force and the only REDHORSE unit assigned to PACAF. Additionally, the 554th RHS is the only Total Force Integrated squadron in the Air Force.

When called upon, the 554th RHS will merge with the Air National Guard unit 254th RHS

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located at Andersen AFB, Guam and the Air Force Reserve unit, 307th RHS located at Barksdale AFB, La. When deployed together as a fully operational REDHORSE squadron of more than 405 personnel, the unit is completely self-sufficient and capable of independent operations worldwide, even in austere, high-threat locations.

by Master Sgt David W. Sommers

554th RED HORSE Squadron

Viets To Fly Gunships

(Pacific Stars And Stripes, February 4, 1971, Tokyo, Japan)

SAIGON (Special)—The U.S. 7th Air Force Monday started training South Vietnamese aircrews on the AC119 shadow gunship at Phan Rang AB, Air Force Base a spokesman announced Monday.

The gunship is the first aircraft both designed for close support missions and large enough to carry all the equipment, including sensors, necessary to locate enemy trucks, storage areas or troops, spokesmen said. It has been used in Southeast Asia since 1967, they said.

Instructors will teach the Vietnamese basic flying and combat tactics on actual missions, spokesmen said.

The training is a part of the continuing Vietnamese Air Force improvement and modernization program, spokesmen said.

Also, the Air Force maintenance men Monday started training Vietnamese with C123 Provider, tactical airlift transport, at Tan Son Nhut, spokesmen said.

The aircraft has better airlift capability than C47 Sky-train and the C119 Flying Boxcar now flown by the Vietnamese, Air Force, according to spokesmen.

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Explosion Rips MP Headquarters

Blamed on VC Saboteurs

SAIGON—An explosion blamed on Viet Cong saboteurs ripped through a U.S. military police barracks and headquarters Saturday, wounding nine Americans and destroying the installation in the latest of an apparent new wave of terrorist attacks in South Vietnam.

The blast rocked the M.P. installation at the central-coast city of Phan Rang, 175 miles north of Saigon, shortly after a string of explosions rolled through a big ammunition dump near the capital, setting off fires that raged for 10 hours. Two Americans were hurt in the explosion at the U.S. Army Ammunition Depot at Long Binh, 11 miles north of Saigon.

In another incident, a Communist terrorist hurled a hand grenade at a group of GIs walking through the northern port city of Qui Nhon, wounding three of the Americans.

South of Saigon, a Viet Cong swimmer tossed a grenade into a U.S. Navy river patrol boat, severely damaging the vessel, wounding two crewmen and leaving a third missing and feared dead.

The explosion that destroyed the M.P. installation at Phan Rang was believed caused by a demolition charge that had been secreted inside the building. Fire that followed the explosion destroyed whatever the blast did not.

There were 22 Military Police in the building at the time of the blast. A Vietnamese army strike force set out from Phan Rang to search for the attackers but they found no one. (*Lovington Daily Leader, February 5, 1967, Lovington, New Mexico*)

Former Webb Airman Honored

(Big Spring Daily Herald, August 17, 1969, Big Spring, Texas)

A religious chalice was recently dedicated at the Phan Rang Air Base, Vietnam, chapel in memory of former Webb SSgt. Walter J. Dart Jr., who was killed during an enemy attack on the base. The base personnel office there was also named in his honor.

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The gold chalice was given to Phan Rang by Mrs. Walter J. Dart Sr. whose son was killed while on duty when an enemy rocket hit the base personnel office. Sgt. Dart, a 21-year-old native of Kingston N.Y. had been a personnel specialists with the 35th Combat Support Group at Phan Rang.

At Webb, he served in the quality control section of military personnel branchy here between June 1, 1966, and May 1968. He was killed June 7, 1969.

Disinherited Ones Live Where Woman Is God

(Beckley Post Herald, February 28, 1968, Beckley, West Virginia)

EDITOR’S NOTE The Chams are Vietnam’s disinherited ones. A vanishing race, the Chams once ruled the land, believe that God is a woman, and now live virtually unaware of the war around them. When **Susan Bauernfeind** of Menasha, Wisc., served with the American Red Cross at Phan Rang, she paid a visit to a nearby village and wrote this report.

SUSAN BAUERNFEIND PHAN RANG, Vietnam (AP) Nearly 2000 years ago, this land was ruled by a handsome and tough people — the Tchampa, A mixture of Indian and Khmer (Cambodian) indigenous tribes, they settled uninhabited lands between Saigon and Canton, China.

The Chinese called the Chams “ Liny-y,” - forest savages, because they almost always chose land that was bordered on one side by impenetrable forest.

These people were farmers essentially, and their lives were dominated by religion.

In the year 353 A. D started a series of invasions that lasted 16 centuries. In 1822 the village Chams were once and for all “conquered.” They became the disinherited ones of Vietnam.

Each invasion pushed the beleaguered Chams further South, leaving behind red brick and granite temples that still dot the coast.

One of the last Cham strongholds was in Phan Rang, 165 miles east-northeast of Saigon, and where many Chama still live, separate from their Vietnamese countrymen.

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A 1,200-year old three-tower temple, built in homage to the godking of irrigation, overlooks the villages and vast green valleys where they live as farmers and fishermen.

Chat Thuong, 8 miles south west of Phan Hang, is a typical Cham village. The road leading to this community of 400 people winds through rich rice fields set against jagged mountins.

Inside the village gate is the home of a hamlet elder 64-year-old Quang Dai Minh, a former national assemblymen representing the Chain people.

He wears a long skirt and the turban traditional for Cham-men and as is the custom wisps of hair hang down his neck.

He said he was born not far away but had moved to his wife’s village when they married. Still practiced, he said, is the custom of a girl choosing a husband and sending her parents with two kinds of cake a proposal of marriage.

If a young man eats the cakes, he returns to the girls village with her parents and they are married.

Elder Quang Dai Minh wore two gold rings with a stone in each for protection from evil spirits after he dies. His granddaughter - in-law wore four rings, but only for decoration. “Perhaps,” she said, “I will believe in the evil spirits when I am old.

He believes the first Cham queen came from heaven in stayed on earth for years. Then she gave over reign to a king and rose again to heaven. This same queen created the entire world, he said.

He thought the Chams had originated in China, and did not know they had ever ruled Vietnam. as once they did.

Their religion is based on respect for the “queen that came from the sky,” their ancestors who have the power to protect, and their kings.

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Four times yearly the Brahmin Cham must visit their temples, once in celebration of the New Year, once to pray to ancestors, once to pray for crops and once to pray for peace.

On any day, however, Cham women religious dancers may be called to a home to appease offended ancestor or to ask for a special favor.

Chat Thuong village was neat and well designed. Each home-of wood, mud or cement had a courtyard and fence with a gate.

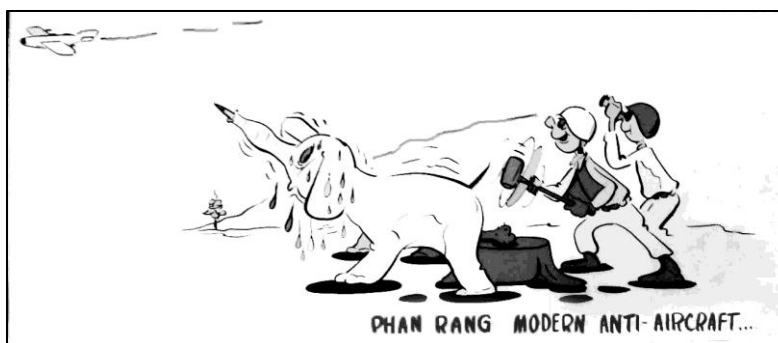
All streets were hedged with interwoven branches. Children skipped along, looking happy and healthy, well dressed.

Old and new are intermingled in the village. A modern small meal factory has an old woman in front, preparing a chew of red beetle nut; a 20th century doctor visits once a week to treat Chas who wear link-lead necklaces to ward off disease.

So it is in one village of the vanishing Chams - a people whose temples once awed Marco Polo, who have no written history of their own, but who teach children Sanskrit, the ancient language of scholars.

As they walk through their villages today, they have an air of pride in their accomplishments, yet most don't know that their forefathers once ruled this land.

The Chams have a saying that “love has no limit,” but they do not intermarry. Their numbers dwindle and the land once theirs is torn end to end with a war they hardly know exists.



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Cartoon drawn by Sgt **Bobby Wise** 35th FMS Hydraulic Shop.



Lt. Col. **William F. Bryant Jr.**, U.S. Air Force retired, age 62, died peacefully at his home in Niceville on Dec. 8th, 2003, after a short illness.

Bill was born in Galveston, TX in 1941. After graduating from Texas City High School in 1959 he entered the United States Air Force Academy where he subsequently received his Bachelor of Science degree and was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1963. Bill earned his pilot's wings at Vance AFB, OK and was assigned to Luke AFB, AZ for combat crew training in the F-100. From 1965 through 1967, Bill was an operational fighter pilot with the 494th Tactical Fighter Squadron, 48th Tactical Fighter Wing, RAF Lakenheath, England. In 1968, Bill served in Southeast Asia as a forward air controller flying the O-2A in support of the U.S. 1st Air Cavalry Division. He participated in extensive combat operations during the 1968 Tet Offensive, including the Battle for Hue, the Siege of Khe Sanh, and the A Shau Valley Offensive. In 1968, Bill was the first forward air controller to receive an in-country checkout in the OV-10 Bronco, and he completed his combat tour as an OV-10 instructor pilot with the 504th Tactical Air Support Group at Phan Rang AB, Republic of South Vietnam.

From 1969 to 1971 Bill flew the AT-33 and F-100 while assigned to the 27th Tactical Fighter Wing, Cannon AFB, NM. In 1971, Bill attended the Air Force Institute of Technology, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH where he earned a Master of Science Degree in aeronautical and air weapons design engineering. Following graduation in 1973, Bill was assigned to the Air Force Flight Test Center, Edwards AFB, CA, serving as a flight test engineer on the YF-16 Lightweight Fighter Program and F-16 full scale development program. During this period he was also an academic instructor at the USAF Test Pilot School.

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Returning to primary flying duty in 1977, Bill was a flight commander and operations officer in the 425th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, Williams AFB, AZ, flying as an F-5 instructor pilot. In 1979-1980, Bill was Commander, USAF Detachment, U.S. Military Training Mission, Taif, Saudi Arabia, where he was the chief advisor and F-5 instructor pilot to the Royal Saudi Air Force. In 1980, Bill attended the Defense Language Institute, Monterey, CA, earning a Master's degree equivalent in Indonesian language and cultural studies. He then served as Chief, Air Force Division, U.S. Defense Liaison Group, U.S. Embassy, Jakarta, Indonesia, and was also the U.S. Deputy Air Attache. During this tour of duty Bill piloted the embassy C-12 aircraft and flew the F-5 with the Indonesian Air Force. Following this assignment Bill reported to USAFTAWC in September 1983.

Bill was a command pilot who has flown the F-100, A-37, O-2, OV-10, AT-33, L-20, C-12, and F-5. He has over 2,800 hours flying time, including 280 combat missions and 600 hours combat time. His decorations include Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, and numerous expeditionary unit/service awards. His service and skills as a pilot earned him the Distinguished Flying Cross.

In 1993 Bill earned a Masters Degree in Psychology.

Bill loved fishing, boating, writing, reading and spending time with his family and his beloved African Grey, Bobby. Bill was very patriotic and encouraged everyone to exercise their right to vote. After Bill retired from the Air Force, the job he loved most was with his last employer, ATAC. He enjoyed being back working with the fighter planes he loved so much and he could once again smell the jet fuel. Bill had a team of eighteen engineers working under him and he enjoyed working with each of them. He was loved by many and will be missed very much by his family and many friends.

Bill was preceded in death by his father, William F. Bryant and his mother, Avernell of Texas City, TX and his nephew, Christopher Collier of Harlingen, TX.

Bill is survived by his loving wife, Helen Margaret Embley of Vancouver, British Columbia; his daughter Lisa of Conroe, TX; his step-son Dean and his wife Ann of Northport, FL; his son Bill and his wife Nicole of Escondido, CA; his sister Bobbie Jean Tufts and her husband Neely of

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Tucson, AZ; his niece Allison and husband Kamal of San Antonio, TX and his granddaughters Cassandra and Faith. *(December 21, 2003 Texas City Sun (TX))*

Donald E. White Jr., of Seaford, passed away Saturday, Jan. 23, 2010, in Nanticoke Memorial Hospital, with his sole mate by his side.

He was born in Pittsfield, Mass., May 15, 1941. He was preceded in death by his parents Donald E. White and Eleanor Rousseau White; and sister Valerie White Holfs. He is survived by his sole mate and partner, Margaret Lou Reining.

Don graduated from Dalton High School, Dalton, MA and the Northeastern School of Radio and Television Broadcasting. Worked at WHMP in North Hampton, Mass., and WBEC in Pittsfield, Mass. Enlisted in the Army and was awarded the Public Information Specialist MOS 71R, with psychological warfare special identifier. First assignment at Fort Knox, Ky., Public Affairs Office as head of the broadcasting section. Re-assigned to the Special Forces Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, and on to Okinawa, Japan, assigned to the Voice of United Nations Command network. Then joined the Air Force with immediate assignment to American Forces Radio and Television Services Station Manager in Karamurcel, Turkey and Osan AB, Korea, news director in Okinawa and Thule AB, Greenland AFRTS and Sondretrom AB, Greenland. PIO Combat news, Phan Rang, VN, Sr. Television News announcer, American Forces Vietnam Network, Saigon. NCOIC Radio Operation, American Forces Korea Network, Saigon, NCOIC Radio Operations, American Forces Korea Network Special Events Radio-NBC Korea Olympics. NCOIC Field and Studio Production, European Broadcasting Squadron. Ramstein AB, Germany, Missile Squadron Flight Security Supervisor, 10th Missile Squadron; Great Falls, Montana NCOIC Video Production, Training Section-Security Squadron. Retiring as E-7 Master Sergeant September 1989.

Civilian positions held: Public Safety Director and Harbor Master at King Cove, AK; assistant to Regional Office of the Vice President of Stanley Smith Security Company, San Antonio, TX, Operations Director Stanley Smith Security Alaska, Anchorage, AK; Community Relations Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Dover.

Other honors: Winner of the Department of Defense Thomas Jefferson Award for First Place for

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professional excellence in broadcasting for the Armed Forces of the United States of America in 1983. The award was for producing, directing and anchor person for a 30 minute Air Force documentary show called American Force Perspective. A show produced by the European Broadcast Squadron at Ramstein AB, Germany. Winner of the U.S. Air Force Media Contest Broadcasting Award, First Place, Category D "American Forces Perspective, as primary contributor, Ramstein, Germany 1983. Appointed as the Prince of Faushing, City of Ramstein, Germany. (Equal to the King of Mardi Gras). Mayor chose me to represent the city in 1985 because of my special reports on American Forces Network Europe on the event that runs for a full year. Special duty to all events as "Prince:" *(January 28, 2010 Leader & State Register (Seaford, DE))*

George D. Hails, 74, of Albany died Jan. 22 at Samaritan Albany General Hospital. George was born in Bonne Terre, Mo., to Amos and Rose (Vance) Hails. The oldest child of three, he attended Richmond Union High School in California, graduating in 1954. He greatly enjoyed sports while attending that school, which carried over into his later life. He participated in, coached and umpired fast-pitch softball, slow-pitch softball and Little League baseball. He was an avid fan of the St. Louis Cardinals (MLB), Oakland Raiders (NFL) and Jeff Gordon (NASCAR).

After graduating from high school he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, where he spent 20 years. During this time he was stationed in many locations, some of which were Thule AB, Greenland; Phan Rang AB, Vietnam; Adair AFS, Oregon; Pt. Arena AFS, California; Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona; and finally George AFB, California, where he retired as a master sergeant in 1974. After he retired he moved back to Albany, where he spent the remainder of his life.

George married Marjorie Andrus in 1960 in Albany; they later divorced.

He is survived by his daughter, Sharon Hails of Albany; sons Terry Hails of Albany and Rob Hails of Milwaukie; three grandchildren, John Lawless of Tampa, Fla., Kassandra Hails of Salem and Darach Coy-Hails of Tacoma, Wash.; sister Gloria Soria of Manteca, Calif.; brother Jarry Hails of Myrtle Creek; half-sister Myrlene; as well as many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his mother, Rose; father Amos; and half-brother John. *(January 28, 2010 Albany Democrat-Herald (OR))*

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THE VILLAGES, Fla. - **James Guy "Jim" Horner**, 71, a longtime resident of Fort Ashby, W.Va., and a "snowbird" in The Villages, went to be with the Lord on Friday, July 24, 2020, at home surrounded by his loving wife and family.

Born, in Keyser, W.Va., on Feb. 12, 1949, he was a son of the late Guy and Mary K. (Ford) Horner; and graduated from Beall High School, in 1967. He enlisted in the Air Force and was assigned as an air weather specialist in the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing in Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. After discharge, he received a Bachelor of Science degree from Frostburg State University. Jim had a strong faith in God and was an active member of Berean Independent Baptist Church, in Fort Ashby.

Jim worked for 31 years as a locomotive engineer at CSX Transportation. Lovingly referred to as "Jack" by many on the railroad, and the "Official Florida Tour Guide" by his family and friends, you could always find Jim with a smile on his face, a golf club or paint brush in his hand, offering a warm embrace, and sharing a funny story to make you smile. He loved golfing, working in the garden and flower beds, spending time with his family and friends, playing a variety of musical instruments with family and friends and cuddling his furry best friend, Lulu. Jim and Carolyn truly loved Florida and began to "snowbird" in 2011. After moving to The Villages, he developed a love for all things golf. Jim loved to cook his signature "mean pot of spaghetti" for everyone that was hungry upon arriving for a visit. Jim always enjoyed the sunshine and especially loved showing his family and friends around when they would visit. Jim lived in paradise on earth and his eternal home is even better.

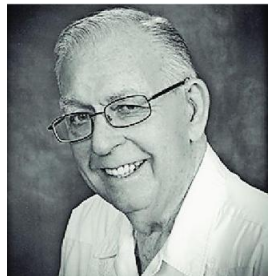
Jim is a cherished husband to his wife, Carolyn; beloved father to his children, James Horner, of Washington, Pa., Julie (Horner) and Mickey Barry, of Morgantown, W.Va., Terri and Robert Yarbrough, of Cumberland, and Tracey Laslo, of Santa Barbara Calif.; and devoted grandfather to Owen and Ean Barry, and Austin and Logan Yarbrough. He was a treasured brother to Terry and Krista Horner, Bill Horner, and Mike and Deborah (Horner) Postma. *(July 29, 2020 Cumberland Times-News, The (MD))*

May 26, 1930 - December 26, 2018 - **George Bunyan Jones Jr.**, 88, passed away to be with the Lord on December 26, 2018. He was born on May 26, 1930 to George Bunyan Jones and Elba Self in Kosciusko, Mississippi. George proudly and honorably served his country in the US Army

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(1947 - 1950) and in the US Air Force (1950 - 1976). He began his military career as an Army musician and played the bass horn with the William Beaumont Army Hospital Band at Ft. Bliss (El Paso), TX. After separating from the Army, he joined the US Air Force and served as a Firefighter at Williams AFB (Chandler), AZ; Chaumont AB, France; and Keesler AFB (Biloxi), MS. In 1957 he transferred to aircraft maintenance and became a crew chief on B-52 bombers at Carswell AFB (Ft. Worth), TX. Additional assignments included positions at Barksdale AFB, LA; Laredo AFB, TX; Mountain Home AFB, ID; and Bergstrom AFB (Austin), TX where he retired in 1976 as a Senior Master Sergeant. George was a Vietnam veteran and was deployed to Ubon Royal Thai AFB, Thailand twice, Phan Rang, Vietnam; and Yokota AB, Japan. George valued a higher education and began taking college classes in 1968 at Laredo Junior College. That is where he met the love of his life, Maria, in an English class. They married on November 7, 1969. In 1986 he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice from St. Edwards University in Austin, TX, and went on to retire from a second career as the Chief of Security for Motorola in 1995.

George will always be remembered for his happy-go-lucky approach to life, positive attitude, quick wit, contagious smile, and especially for his unending love and devotion to his wife and family.

He is preceded in death by his parents; stepmother, Exie Austin; half-sisters, Vivian Jones, Ann and Mary Lee Love; son, George Ronald "Ronnie" Jones; and stepson, Ramiro Rogerio Jr. George is survived by his beloved wife of 49 years, Maria Isidra Garcia Jones, whom he affectionately called "Marie"; daughters, Deborah Campbell (Ken) and Teresa Flores (Domingo); half-brother, Michael Love; stepson, Carl Scruggs Jr. (Esther); stepdaughter, Grace Rolph (Glen); grandchildren, Jason, Joseph, and David Edmondson; step grandchildren, Ramiro Rogerio III, Christopher and Anthony Scruggs; great grandchildren, Rhett and Jacob Edmondson, and step great grandchildren, Isaiah, Annavey, Savannah, and Amber Rogerio. *(January 6, 2019 San Antonio Express-News (TX))*

These two women died together in another aircraft crash.

(October 29, 2018 Newport Plain Talk, The (TN))

Eleanor G Alexander, Captain, US Army, deceased. Capt. Alexander, was born September 18,

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1940 and was from Rivervale, New Jersey. A member of 85th EVAC Hosp, 55th Med Group, 44th Med BDE. She was killed in an aircraft accident on a return trip from Phan Rang, November 30, 1967, Binh Dinh Province, South Vietnam. She is listed on panel 31E, Line 8.

Hedwig Diane Orlowski, First Lieutenant, US Army, deceased. Lt. Orlowski, was born April 13, 1944 and was from Detroit, Michigan. A member of 67th EVAC Hosp, 55th Med Group, 44th Med BDE. She was killed in an aircraft accident on a return trip from Phan Rang, November 30, 1967, Binh Dinh Province, South Vietnam. She is listed on panel 31E, Line 15.

Note: This accident occurred on 30 November 1967 when a C-7 Caribou crashed during a routine air transport flight. As the aircraft approached Qui Nhon the pilot was advised that the weather at the airfield had fallen below safety minima. He replied that he would proceed to Nha Trang where the weather was better but the aircraft hit a mountain at 1,850 feet about five miles south of Qui Nhon. The weather at the time consisted of low cloud and rain that reduced visibility to about two miles. The four crew and 22 passengers, including two US civilians, were killed in the accident. The aircraft belonged to the 458 TAS 483 TAW at Cam Ranh Bay. This accident or the casualties are not listed in **“Chronological Order of Phan Rang AB Air Losses”** or **“The Casualty list for Phan Rang AB Assigned Personnel”** because this aircraft just transited Phan Rang AB and neither the aircraft or passengers were assigned to the base, however they could have temporarily worked at the base hospital, but I have no way of knowing that or the entire itinerary of the aircraft and where all the passengers embarked.

CMSgt **Don K. Holderness** USAF (Ret.) The Chief made his final HALO jump into eternity April 9, 2016. Don was born Aug. 23, 1946 in Maysville, KY. He graduated from high school in Norwood, OH in June 1964. On Sept. 10, 1964 he entered the Air Force where he remained on active duty until Oct. 1, 1990. His stateside assignments included Osceola AFS Wisconsin, Lockbourne AFB Ohio, Billy Mitchell Field Milwaukee, WI, Glenn L. Martin State Airport Baltimore, MD, and Mac Dill AFB Florida. His overseas postings included Cam Ranh AB, Phan Rang AB, and Quang Tri Vietnam, Rhein Main AB and Wasserkuppe AS Germany, RAF Lakenheath England, Naples Italy, and Brussels Belgium. He was decorated five times for valor, seven times for meritorious service, earned ten battle stars, and was awarded numerous other medals and ribbons. He was a Master Parachutist. After retiring from the Air Force he worked for several defense contractors, finally retiring in July 2007. He spent his retirement years residing in Valrico. During

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his retirement he enjoyed annual cruises and trips to Europe. He was a member of AMVETS Post 44, AMVETS Post 26, Moose Lodge 1880, and Eagles Lodge 3566. He is survived by his fiancée, Tina Zitnyar; son, Thomas Holderness (Nicole Dunbar); son, David Holderness; sister, Lois Canterbury (Roger); and grandchildren, Elexys and Ethan Holderness. Internment with Military Honors will take place at Florida National Cemetery. *(April 13, 2016 Tampa Bay Times (FL))*

Thomas Neyman 65, of San Bernardino, CA, died December 29th, 2013 at home with his wife of 40 years Dona by his side. Surviving Tom are his daughter Laura, grandson Christopher, granddaughter Carly, great grandson Caden and sister Annette of San Jose, CA. Tom was a proudly served our country in the United States Air Force from 1967 to 1980. Tom was a USAF Loadmaster on C-141s, C-123's and stationed at several bases including, 8th MAS-McChord AFB, Washington, 310 TAS-Phan Rang AB, RVN, and 15 MAS-445th Airlift Wing (Associate) at Norton AFB, CA. He was an original member of the Golden West Chapter of the Professional Loadmaster Association. After leaving the USAF Tom and Dona started a pet grooming business, Blues House of Grooming. Tom, (The Admiral), was a clamper and a member of the Ancient and Honorable Order of E Clampus Vitus, The Billy Holcomb 1069 Chapter for 32 years. Telling stories on these trips was one of his favorite past times. *(January 11, 2014 Sun, The (San Bernardino, CA))*



Air Medal For Wiemer **J. Tom Wiemer**, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Wiemer, 201 S. Starr, has been awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal for meritorious service in Vietnam. The medal was for his service as a munitions specialist at Phan Rang, Vietnam, from June 1967 to May 1968. Early this month, Wiemer was promoted to sergeant at Whiteman AFB, Mo., where he is now stationed. *(Burlington Hawk Eye, October 23, 1968, Burlington, Iowa)*

Capt. **Michael L. McCloud**, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. B. McCloud, 1031 N. Fourth, has re-enlisted

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in the Air Force at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. He is a personnel officer at Phan Rang with the Pacific Air Forces. (*Burlington Hawk Eye, October 23, 1968, Burlington, Iowa*)

McLean Airman Receives Medal WITH U.S. COMBAT AIR FORCES, Vietnam - Sergeant **John J. Engle**, son of Mrs. Norma B. Engle of McLean has received the U.S. Air Force commendation Medal at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Sergeant Engle was decorated for meritorious service as an information specialist in the editorial branch at the Air Force Home Town News Center, Tinker AFB, Okla. He was cited for his outstanding job knowledge, professional skills and devotion to duty. He is now at Phan Rang in a unit of the Pacific Air Forces. The sergeant, a graduate of Enid (Okla.) High School, attended Phillips University in Enid and Oklahoma City University. His wife, Karen, is the daughter of Mrs. Ruth O. White of Aline, Okla. (*Pampa Daily News, January 15, 1968, Pampa, Texas*)

Airman **Anthony R. Vivo**, of West Islip, has completed basic training at Lackland AFB, Texas, and his remaining at Lackland for training as a security policeman. U.S. Air Force Sgt. Charles Baldwin, of Bay Shore, is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam, serving as an aircraft mechanic. (*September 9, 2021, Islip Bulletin, The (NY)*)

U.S. Air Force Staff Sergeant **Ray E. Meckstroth**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Earl E. Meckstroth, 104 N. Jefferson St., New Bremen has received three awards of the Air Medal for air action while assigned at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Sgt. Meckstroth, flight engineer, was cited for his outstanding airmanship and courage on successful and import missions completed under hazardous conditions. He now holds nine awards of the Air Medal. He was presented the medals at Langley AFB, Virginia where he is serving with the 4500th Air Base Wing, a unit of the Tactical Air Command which provides combat units for air support of U.S. ground forces. The sergeant has completed 24 months combat duty in Vietnam. He is a 1958 graduate of New Bremen High School. Meckstroth’s wife, JoAnne, is the daughter of Mrs. Herbert Berning, Water Street, New Bremen. (*August 8, 2020 | Evening Leader, The (St. Marys, OH)*)

The late husband and son-in-law of former Jefferson residents has been honored posthumously and had a facility in Vietnam named in his memory. Captain **George Andrews**, husband of the former Miss Dorothy Hicks, and son-in-law of Mrs. Margaret Hicks, recently of Jefferson and now of Big Spring, Texas, was a hero of the Vietnam War. The Distinguished Flying Cross, Air

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Medal, Purple Heart and Air Force Commendation Medal, posthumously awarded to Andrews were presented to his widow at Webb Air Force Base, Texas. The alert facility at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam, was recently dedicated in his memory. Andrews, a member of the 615th Tactical Fighter Squadron, scrambled from the alert facility for a mission while on night alert duty in Vietnam Oct. 15, 1969. During the mission his wing men reported the captain's F-100 Super Sabre appeared to pull up from a pass over the target and then rolled into the ground. (*May 1, 2020 Frederick News-Post, The (MD)*)

Sgt. Tregre Receives U.S.A.F. Commendation Medal Sergeant **Earl B. Tregre**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clifton R. Tregre, of Labadieville, La., has received the U.S. Air Force Commendation Medal at Forbes AFB, Kansas. Sgt. Tregre, ammunitions specialist, was decorated for meritorious service at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. The sergeant is a graduate of Assumption High School. (*January 15, 2019 Bayou-Pioneer, The (Pierre Part, LA)*)

Staff Sergeant **Halbert J. Tusinger**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Tusinger of 510 S. College St., Siloam Springs, received the U.S. Air Force Commendation Medal at Travis AFB, Calif. Sgt. Tusinger was decorated for meritorious service as a jet engine mechanic at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. He was cited for his outstanding professional skill and initiative. (At the time of the article) He was at Travis with the Military Airlift Command that provided global airlift, air rescue, aeromedical evacuation, air weather and air photographs and geodetic services for U.S. forces. (*October 18, 2017 Siloam Springs Herald-Leader, The (AR)*)

Sgt. Phillips Decorated With Commendation Medal

Denver Technical Sergeant **John M. Phillips**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Earl T. Phillips of Labadieville, La., has been decorated with the U. S. Air Force Commendation Medal at Lowry AFB, Colo. Sergeant Phillips was awarded the medal for meritorious service as a food service supervisor at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. He was cited for his outstanding professional skill and initiative, which contributed to the success of the U. S. Air Force mission in Southeast Asia. The sergeant is now at Lowry as a member of the Air Training Command, which conducts the educational programs necessary to provide skilled fliers and technicians for the aerospace force. A veteran of the Korean War, he is a 1948 graduate of Texas High School, Texarkana, Texas. His wife, Pansy, is the daughter of Mrs. George Johnson of Pine Bluff, Ark. The sergeant is a graduate of Siloam Springs High School. (*March 14, 2017 | Bayou-Pioneer, The (Pierre Part, LA)*)

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Staff Sergeant **David W. Campbell**, Malvern, is decorated with his second award of the U.S. Air Force Commendation Medal at Spangdahlem AB, Germany. Sergeant Campbell distinguish himself by meritorious service as an air-traffic controller at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. He is a 1962 graduate of Malvern High School and attended Kent State University. He is now at Spangdahlem with a unit of the Air Force Communications Service. *(May 25, 2011 News Leader, The (Minerva, Malvern, OH))*

U.S. Air Force Sergeant **Calvin E. Sultemeier**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Sultemeier of Johnson City, is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Sergeant Sultemeier, is in unit of the pacific Air Forces. Before his arrival in Southeast Asia, he was assigned to the 3700th Civil Engineering Squadron at Lackland, AFB, Texas. The sergeant is a graduate of Johnson City. His wife, Carolyn, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Pollark, Homestead, Fla. *(July 8, 2009 Blanco County News (TX))*

Robert Boyer has devoted countless hours to the Boy Scouts of America.

RAPID CITY - **Robert J. Boyer**, a licensed contractor and owner of E Z Home Repair, was recently recognized as May's veteran of the month by Mayor Jim Shaw in partnership with the Veterans Coordination Commission.

Boyer grew up in Oil City, Pa., and joined the Air Force after high school. He did basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, armament specialist training at Lowry AFB, Colo., and spent 18 months at Cannon AFB, N.M., before being sent to Vietnam.

While stationed at Phan Rang Air Base, Boyer remembers taking direct enemy fire at least 35 times while loading weapons onto the aircraft. For his efforts, Boyer was awarded the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Vietnam Presidential Unit Citation, the National Defense Service Medal with one bronze star and the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with palm.

After his tour in Vietnam, Boyer was stationed at McConnell AFB, Kansas, assigned to the F-105 Aircraft Gun Shop. After re-enlisting, Boyer was again sent to Cannon AFB before going to Misawa Air Base, Japan. While there, he worked to close the war reserve materials division and

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relocate it to Yokota Air Base.

It was at Yokota AB that Boyer met his future wife, Carol, on a blind date. They were married three months later and have been married for more than 31 years and have two sons. The couple spent a couple of more years in Japan, he at Yokota and she at Takakawa Air Base. Their first assignment together was to Kadena AB, Okinawa, where Boyer loaded weapons onto the F-4 Phantom aircraft. In March 1976, the Boyers moved to Ellsworth AFB, where Bob was assigned to the B-52 Stratofortress.

In March 1979 Boyer was sent to Osan AB, Korea for the next year before returning to Ellsworth AFB for the last 12 years of his military career, in which he served in many roles, the most memorable being the resource advisor for the B-52-to-B-1 transition.

Boyer retired as a master sergeant in 1992 and the Boyers made Rapid City their permanent home. Boyer is a lifetime member of the VFW, a member of the American Legion and the Elks BPOE, as well as the Handy Man Club of America and the Bassmaster Fishing Club.

For more than 20 years, Boyer has devoted countless hours to the Boy Scouts of America and most recently served as Scoutmaster of Troop 1187. He was recently recognized for his service by receiving the National Presidential Scoutmaster Award of Merit and the Penjahame District Award of Merit. (*May 24, 2004 Rapid City Journal, The (SD)*)

J. Tom Wiemer, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Wiemer, 201 S. Starr St., is awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal for meritorious service in Vietnam. He was a munitions specialist at Phan Rang, Vietnam from June 1967 to May 1968. He has since been promoted to sergeant and serves at an air force base in Missouri. (*September 28, 2000 Hawk Eye, The (Burlington, IA)*)

Staff Sgt. **David J. Munska**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas J. Munska of 46 Woodbine Ave., Northampton has received the U.S. Air Force Commendation Medal at L.G. Hanscom Field. Sgt. Munska was cited for his outstanding performance of duty as a crew chief with the 311th Tactical Airlift Squadron at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. (*April 15, 1997 Daily Hampshire Gazette (Northampton, MA)*)

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Air Force Sgt. **Charles Baldwin**, of Bay Shore, is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam, serving as an aircraft mechanic. (*September 9, 2021 Islip Bulletin, The (NY)*)

U.S. Air Force Staff Sergeant **Ray E. Meckstroth**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Earl E. Meckstroth, 104 N. Jefferson St., New Bremen has received three awards of the Air Medal for air action while assigned at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Sgt. Meckstroth, flight engineer, was cited for his outstanding airmanship and courage on successful and import missions completed under hazardous conditions. He now holds nine awards of the Air Medal. He was presented the medals at Langley AFB, Virginia where he is serving with the 4500th Air Base Wing, a unit of the Tactical Air Command which provides combat units for air support of U.S. ground forces. The sergeant has completed 24 months combat duty in Vietnam. He is a 1958 graduate of New Bremen High School. Meckstroth’s wife, JoAnne, is the daughter of Mrs. Herbert Berning, Water Street, New Bremen. (*August 8, 2020 Evening Leader, The (St. Marys, OH)*)

Sgt. **Charles P. Werner**, son of Mrs. Gertrude Werner, 57 Carimona St., has arrived for duty at Plattsburgh AFB, N.Y. Sgt. Werner, an airframe repairman, is assigned to a unit of the Strategic Air Command. He previously served at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. The sergeant is a 1960 graduate, of Winona Senior High School. (*Winona Daily News, December 7, 1967, Winona, Minnesota*)

ST CHARLES, Minn. — Airman 1.C. **Joel E. Ellringer**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Earl J. Ellringer, St. Charles, is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Airman Eilringer, an aircraft engine mechanic, is a member of the Military Airlift Command in support of the Pacific Air Forces. Before his arrival in Vietnam, he was assigned to Clark AB, Philippines; He is a 1966 graduate of St, Charles High School. (*Winona Daily News, December 7, 1967, Winona, Minnesota*)

Doug’s Comments:



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Once again I just wanted to remind everyone that now all of the Phan Fares that were in my possession have now been beautifully scanned, and are on-line at Fold3.com, as well as all of the Phan Rang Newsletters to date. To access Fold3 you can sign in with your Facebook password or your local library may offer a link where you can access everything for

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free. My Metropolitan Library system also provides free access to Ancestry.com, but you have to be at the library to use it, but Fold3 you can access it just from your computer at home. The 2022 Annual Phan Rang AB Veterans Reunion is scheduled for 13-15 October in Mobile, Alabama. There still is plenty of time and rooms are available for you to get in on the action. We have many exciting things planned just for the reunion and the city of Mobile also offers many other entertainment opportunities. The annual reunion is a time to rekindle old friendships and make new ones, but the main thing to know is you will not be a stranger, in fact, you'll believe you knew these comrades all of your life. To make a hotel reservation at the Mobile Marriott copy and paste the link that is displayed below into your browser. The reunion rate is effective three days before and three days after the event and to register for the reunion, click [here](#). Reunion shirts and other Phan Rang merchandise is available [here](#). I hope that you enjoyed this newsletter. This newsletter was composed by Douglas Severt and all graphics by Douglas Severt unless otherwise noted. To see a list of all previous newsletters click [here](#). To unsubscribe to Phan Rang News, dougsevert@cox.net and put 'unsubscribe' in subject line.

<https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1647882756323&key=GRP&app=resvlink>